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ABSTRACT

The paper recounts the progress of a deaf blind boy in an interdisciplinary program featuring coordination, consistency, and commitment. Three staff members--a teacher of the hearing impaired, a vision consultant, and a paraprofessional--describe their role in educating the student. Aspects covered include the development of a specially adapted speech and language curriculum; use of braille as another means of communication; a math curriculum touching on time and money concepts and counting; orientation and mobility instruction and overall physical development; a daily living skill curriculum centered on eating and food preparation; vocational tasks such as assembly and simple contract work; and social skills focusing on compliance with behavioral demands and increasing independence. The importance of staff cooperation is emphasized. A partial list of commercial and everyday materials for use in a curriculum for a deaf/blind student concludes the document. (CL)

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Deaf/Blind Students - They Can't What?

A presentation given at the 61st Annual CEC Convention, Detroit, Michigan, April 4-8, 1983

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INTRODUCTION

Our presentation concerns a student we'll name "J", who was born in 1965, congenitally deaf and blind due to maternal rubella. His visual impairment was detected at birth and his hearing loss at age one and a half years. J has a profound hearing loss and no usuable vision. At age three years, J was seen by a teacher of the hearing impaired once a week and a vision consultant three times a week for one school year. He then attended the state school for the blind for five years, as a residential student. During this period, he spent week-ends, vacations, and summers with his parents and three younger non-handicapped siblings. When J was nine years old, his parents felt he would learn more from being in the home environment and attending the county program for the hearing impaired as a day student.

We would like to show a brief video tape sequence to illustrate the entry level of J. He could fingerspell and vocalize a few isolated words and could read a few words in Grade 1 braille. He wore a hearing aid, but made little use of this amplification. He had good self-help skills. It was felt that effective intervention would need to be made at J's level and thus, an individualized curriculum was initiated. It was ascertained that J's hearing loss was the primary handicap because communication is an important

aspect of every curriculum area. It was further ascertained that vision and orientation and mobility services could be provided as secondary to the hearing impaired curriculum. Since age nine, J has attended this county program, which is an oral program housed in a public school. Until this year, J has been the only deaf/blind student among approximately 85 hearing impaired children. Even though J was not in a 230 day program, summer work has been provided in the form of summer school, summer homework, and summer employment.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A PROGRAM

Over the past nine years, we have developed some ideas as to what is necessary when faced with the task of having to plan a new curriculum for a student whose needs are very unique. We see three basic characteristics of such a program: coordination, consistency, and commitment.

We decided that in order to best meet J's needs, we had to coordinate the efforts of a variety of professional disciplines, the involvement of the parents, and the newly emerging curriculum. Furthermore, we had to designate one person to be in charge of all of this and to encourage cooperation and communication. We found an effective tool for this coordination to be the regular staff meetings. It was at this time that problems could be solved, new curriculum items could be worked out, and support and guidance could be given to those of us who, at times, were frustrated and discouraged.

Our staff meetings also afforded us the opportunity to maintain consistency in the many aspects of J's curriculum. Working as we were with such diverse expertise, we were required to aid each other in setting consistent demands regarding speech, language, use of amplification, braille, mobility, and discipline.

Finally, the success of our program must, in part, be attributed to the commitment made by everyone involved. We realized early that an effective curriculum for J was going to require a great deal of time (especially in the initial stages). Traditional strategies had to be adapted, creative methods has to be devised, and realistic goals had to be set and continually reevaluated. We were working with many personalities and we had to be flexible in our own personal commitments, not losing sight of our final goal. Perseverance has been an invaluable trait of everyone who has worked with J!

We have a brief video sequence of one of our staffings, at which we were focusing on some of our vocational concerns for J. Present at this particular staffing were: J's mother, the vision consultant, two teachers of the hearing impaired, the orientation and mobility instructor, and the county work-study consultant. Over the past nine years, the core staff who has worked with J has been teachers of the hearing impaired (one serving as coordinator), paraprofessionals, an itinerant vision consultant, and an orientation and mobility instructor. We have also used on a consultant basis a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, a work-study consultant, a Commission for the Blind counselor, and state deaf/blind consultants.

We in this presentation represent a teacher of the hearing impaired, a vision consultant, and a paraprofessional. With this presentation, it is our hope that we can show how our unique roles and expertise have been combined to provide an effective program for this particular student. We further hope that our program demonstrates the characteristics of coordination, consistency, and commitment.

CURRICULUM - Speech and Language

As educators of the hearing impaired, we began J's curriculum with what we knew. Basic to the education of hearing impaired children is speech and language. We began by teaching J the Northampton System of Diacritical Markings, given to him in the braille form. This way we could begin to teach him basic words and patterns. In our staffings, we developed a list of expressions J should be using and all the personnel consistently demanded the same oral responses from him. Included in these staffings were J's parents, so the language and speech expectations were reinforced in the home. This list has been revised and expanded throughout the past nine years.

Basic also to the language development of hearing impaired children is calendar and news. This is a concrete method used to teach abstract time concepts. In addition to providing structure for communication in the oral and braille forms, the technique helps the child become aware of and interact with the environment. The news concerns real life events which are familiar to the child and thus are more meaningful.

We have two video tape sequences which demonstrate the calendar and news technique of teaching language. Our first problem was how to adapt a calendar for a blind child. We used a square, magnetized chalkboard and divided it into smaller squares by the use of yarn. We brailled the month, the days, and the dates on small pieces of paper and glued them to the appropriate places. J was then taught to locate today, yesterday, and tomorrow. These brailled words were on magnetic clips and he would put these in the correct places. He would also have to respond to questions:

What day is today? Today is Wednesday, May 13.

Simple news for each day was brailled on strips of paper and were placed in the appropriate squares:

It is raining today. Mother will come to school.
It was sunny yesterday. We made hot chocolate.

The first video tape sequence was taken the second year J was in the program and the second tape was taken the following year. He is doing basically the same activity, but the time concepts and the language of the news have been expanded.

Another technique for teaching language is the language experience story. These are about real events happening in the child's life, thus giving meaning to the vocabulary and language structure. Language experience stories are excellent for teaching verb tense because we first introduce the story before the event happens, using the future tense; discuss it while it is happening, using the present progressive tense; and finally talk about it after it has happened, using the past tense. These stories also reinforce speech, auditory training, braille, and braille reading. We have a video tape sequence of J and a paraprofessional doing a language experience story about his going to the dentist. This sequence also illustrates the coordination with the home, as his mother would write to us what they were going to be doing as a family. Because J has not been able to read brailled conventional books due to the difficulty of the language level, we have organized many of his language experience stories into books.

Our last language tape sequence demonstrates how we are presently doing the news. J's mother daily uses the Tellatouch to discuss the event and to help him structure the language. J brailles the story and brings it to school. We then use the story to reinforce and teach vocabulary, speech, language structure, braille, and comprehension through questioning.

CURRICULUM - Braille

Due to the severity of J's visual loss, it was decided he would best benefit from braille as another means of communication, along with speech. Upon entrance to the program, J recognized some words, but did not write braille. Braille was presented in cooperation with the staff and parents. While the staff worked on word meanings and speech with J, the vision consultant worked on the braille. J's mother and the hearing impaired staff also took on the commitment, over and above their other duties, to learn braille simultaneously with J. They met weekly with the vision consultant to learn new configurations and rules for both Grade 1 and Grade 2 braille. We have a video tape of J in the second year in the program, which demonstrates his skills as they progressed.

The first segment highlights J's ability to braille from an oral question as well as his ability to use brailled cards for spelling. J copies from braille utilizing a letter by letter approach. Erasing is done through the use of his fingernail, however, the actual technique is greatly exaggerated.

The final segment, taped this year, demonstrates the use of the Tellatouch in J's braille lesson. The Tellatouch is a device which has metal braille dots which raise on one side, and a standard typewriter keyboard and the six braille keys on the other. As a person types, the appropriate braille dots raise and the individual can read the message letter by letter. This device enables people who do not know braille to communicate with the deaf/blind. With the introduction of the Tellatouch into J's curriculum, the need for fluency in Grade 1 braille became apparent. The introduction of Grade 2 braille had been questioned from the

beginning, because of the loss of phonetic clues necessary for good speech production. Although its necessity was never clarified, J was taught Grade 2 braille, which made available to him printed books and text, but made it more difficult to reinforce appropriate speech. Today both Grade 1 and Grade 2 braille are used interchangeably with J.

It is obvious that J had the mental capabilities to quickly learn to read and write braille and this factor can not be overlooked when evaluating the success of this particular curriculum area. However, the coordination of the efforts of all the staff and J's parents to learn braille has also attributed to J's fluency in this mode of communication.

CURRICULUM - Math

J's math curriculum began with oral rote counting and one-to-one correspondence. A brailled math textbook was used with J for several years, in an attempt to teach basic addition and subtraction facts. The vision consultant began using the abacus with J mainly because this was a familiar technique to use as a teacher of the blind. We have continued to use the abacus, but have, in recent years, tried to use it in more meaningful situations; i.e. figuring his savings account balance and adding the cost of his lunch in the cafeteria.

Time concepts were immediately introduced into the curriculum in terms of J's schedule and daily activities. In the third year, telling time was taught by the use of a large clock with brailled numbers glued to the face. When J was twelve, he got his first braille wristwatch and began to tell time with it when prompted. Over the past two years, we have attempted to make time more

meaningful for J and to make him more responsible for it. Earlier this year, J finally began reading his watch without prompting and moving independently to his classes. His family has also reinforced this responsibility for time. J even awakens independently with the use of an electric fan connected to a timer.

Money concepts were introduced into the curriculum during J's third year in the program. His family was very cooperative with this and always gave J money to buy his lunch and special treats. Consequently, J understood the basic value of money and what he could do with it. The money portion of the math curriculum began with coin recognition, value and equivalency, and addition and subtraction. In the seventh year in the program, J began working for pay. This was only a small stipend, but it was given to him in the form of a check and afforded us many new opportunities to teach money concepts. J opened a savings account and, as part of his mobility lesson, would walk to the bank on payday and deposit his check. Since J first opened his account, he has continued to work (for increased pay) and has continued to increase his savings. He bought a new braille wristwatch and paid for part of the purchase of his Tellatouch with his own money. Recently, we have introduced the recognition and counting of paper money and have continued making these concepts meaningful through the use of language experience stories which are, in effect, story problems.

J has not become expert at paper money and we have many goals toward which we still are working. However, we feel the math portion of the curriculum has been successful and it has been so because of the coordinated efforts of the math and vocational teachers, the O&M instructor, the vision consultant, and J's family.

CURRICULUM - Physical Development

The area of orientation and mobility has probably been one of the least consistent in J's curriculum due to the irregular availability of personnel. J had an o&m instructor for the first two years in the program, none the third year, a different instructor the fourth year, and again none in the fifth year. Consequently, each time a new instructor was hired, re-training would take place with J. Fortunately, we have had the same o&m instructor for the past four years and the consistency and progress are obvious.

The area of orientation and mobility required a great deal of coordination between the instructor and the rest of the staff and J's family. The instructor would teach J various strategies, i.e. sighted guide techniques and cane skills and then would demonstrate these to us at our staffings. In this way, all of us would be consistent in our mobility expectations of J. We would aid the o&m instructor with communication techniques and would teach J the language and speech needed for his travels. The Tellatouch has become a valuable tool for the o&m instructor during the lessons.

In J's third year in the program, we became concerned with his physical development because it seemed that many of his muscles had atrophied from lack of use (we guessed). We have a physical therapist test J and our suspicions were confirmed. The physical therapist suggested some exercises and a paraprofessional, who was already doing the Adventures in Movement (A.I.M.) exercise program with other hearing impaired children, began working with J. This part of the curriculum continued for five years, with various emphasis, various materials, one being the "I Can" series,

and various strategies, such as a home exercise program.

We also ascertained that J had acquired many poor posture habits, such as shuffling his feet when he walked and sitting with his legs crossed, spine curved, and head down. We began a coordinated effort among all the personnel to consistently remind J not to walk and sit in this manner. We called upon the occupational therapist to devise ankle weights and a foot strap to help remind J to lift his feet. Overall, this has been successful and he now seldom needs to be reminded. We devised some simple diet control techniques and worked with J to help him become more responsible for making his own decisions as to what to eat.

For the past two years, J has participated in an adaptive physical education class with other multiply-handicapped hearing impaired students. This program has utilized exercise, aerobics, exercise apparatus, such as a treadmill and a stationary bicycle, and independence. We have a video tape sequency showing a segment of that class.

CURRICULUM - Daily Living Skills

J entered the program with good self-help skills, so this part of the curriculum has mainly emphasized eating and food preparation. We began with some basic skills, such as pouring, spreading, and cutting. Once these skills were practiced, we had J prepare a simple lunch which would incorporate these skills. Once he became proficient in a certain meal, we added more skills and expanded the menu. Our video tape sequence shows J chopping an onion, mixing this into some hamburg, and making it into a patty. He also peels a carrot and slices some celery sticks.

Finally, he removes the hamburger from the pan, puts it on a bun, and puts catsup on it. All of this is not done completely independently and our tape shows how the paraprofessional helps J, usually by placing her hands over his; but never doing it for him.

We coordinated language with daily living skills in that all of J's cooking experiences were brailled into language experience stories. When J began preparing more involved foods, we brailled a recipe for him to follow. We developed a file of these recipes and he was able to take this home and use it when he prepares food for his family.

J has made a great deal of improvement in his eating skills. We again developed a list of skills, such as cutting with the edge of the fork and piercing food with the fork, which we gradually taught, practiced, and expanded. He is now quite proficient and independent in the correct usage of utensils. We are still working on proper chewing.

Some additional skills which have been taught in this portion of the curriculum have been simple laundry skills; i.e. sorting, folding, and hanging clothes on the line and on hangers, simple cleaning tasks, washing dishes, and making and changing a bed. These tasks have been performed both in simulation and in actuality.

This portion of the curriculum takes a great deal of time. Sometimes a simple lunch can take three class periods: preparing the food, eating lunch, and cleaning up. However, we feel the time is well spent since we are giving J some skills which will help him become more independent and will give him the feeling that he can make choices and that he has some control over his

environment. A program such as this requires good communication and coordination between school and home, as these skills must be practiced in the home environment.

CURRICULUM - Vocational Skills

During his sixth year in the program, when J was fourteen years old, we put into the curriculum some provision for the development of vocational skills. This began with his doing simple tasks within the school environment. He performed such jobs as washing desk tops,cleaning headsets, empting wastebaskets, and picking up and delivering the teachers' mail. We wanted, not only to see how well he could perform these tasks, but also to determine if he could remember a series of different jobs and if he could solve simple problems which arose while working.

The following year we were able to receive a stipend for the work J was doing. In order to keep track of the amount of time he worked, we adapted a time clock and made J responsible for "signing" in and out. He opened his savings account at this time and worked on signing his paychecks with an "X". His jobs remained basically the same, but we expanded the curriculum to include assembly simulation activities and simple contract work. We have a brief video tape sequence showing some of these activites.

The summer following his seventh year in the program, J got a job, at minimum wage, washing dishes at the county educational center facility. A teacher of the hearing impaired helped J initially learn the tasks and aided the personnel there in communicating with J. The o&m instructor worked with J in taking public transportation to and from his place of work and in

initially orienting him to the environment. This experience has been very successful as J is able to communicate with and take direction from people other than the regular staff. J has had this job for two consecutive summer.

During his eighth year in the program, J began washing dishes in the high school cafeteria. Again, working with and taking direction from new people. He has had this job for two years. When he started this job, we began to have him use the actual time clock to punch in and out. We have a tape sequence showing J washing dishes in the school cafeteria.

This is a curriculum area on which we plan to focus and expand in the future. We hope to be able to prepare J for competitive employment and give him some work experience in the private sector.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Before we could initially begin any teaching, some consistent behavioral demands had to be set. J was never an overly aggressive child nor a self-abusive child, however he did have a mind of his own and enjoyed manipulating everyone in every situation. It was quickly ascertained that traditional methods of management, i.e. positive social reinforcement or a stern voice and a mean look, were not going to be effective. After much trial and error, a system was set up and consistently used by everyone working with J. When he displayed appropriate behaviors, social reinforcement was immediately given and delayed tangible reinforcement was given when he completed a short lesson. When he displayed clearly defined inappropriate behaviors, he was punished by having a small amount of water squirted on his hand. The threat

of a paddle was made if these inappropriate behaviors continued. We have a video tape sequence which shows that this system was not completely effective. J seemed to get just as much reinforcement from the water punishment as he did from the social praise.

As J grew older, we changed our approach to his behavior management. We began to ignore his inappropriate behaviors while increasing our social praise. In cases of extreme inappropriate behavior, we will take away his materials, so he can not work, or we will make him stand up, completely isolated from any stimuli. As J matured, his rapport with us improved and he now seems to want more to please than to manipulate. We have another tape sequence which shows the only acting-out behavior J now displays and this is caused by frustration with himself when he makes mistakes or has difficulty performing a task.

In addition to our cordinated effort in setting consistent behavioral demands, we are also working toward independence. All of the staff wants to see J become more reliant on himself to make choices and to solve problems and less dependent on us. Our final tape sequence shows J performing some independent work activities and some leisure time activities.

CONCLUSION

All of us working with J have learned right along with him. We have learned to communicate with each other and to admit when we didn't have all the solutions. We have learned to be resourceful and to use every opinion of anyone who would listen to our problems and questions. We have learned to be consistent, yet flexible in just about every area of the curriculum. We have made the commitment

to take the time to develop this program and we have been rewarded many times over.

We can not discount the support we have been given by J's family. They, too, have displayed those characteristics of cooperation, consistency, and commitment. And we can not neglect to mention J, himself. He is a very special young man, who has challenged us and caused us much frustration, but who has also given us much joy. J has enriched all of our lives!

In conclusion, we want to say that we don't have all the answers and our program for J is not complete. We still are working on new ideas and seeking different strategies. We do hope that our presentation has transcended what we are specifically doing with this specific student and we hope we've presented some ideas, suggestions, or bit of philosophy which you, too, can use with your own special children.

EASILY ADAPTABLE MATERIALS

A PARTIAL LIST OF COMMERCIAL & EVERYDAY MATERIALS FOR USE IN A CURRICULUM FOR A DEAF/BLIND STUDENT.

MOTOR/TACTILE DEVELOPMENT

Fit-A-Slot	Michigan Products	sorting
1000 Assorted Beads	Michigan Products	sorting
Tinker Toys		fine motor dexterity
Reels & Wheels	DLM	fine motor dexterity
Counting Rods	Teaching Resources	fine motor discrimination
Perfection	Lakeside	fine motor discrimination
Loc Blocks	Entex	sorting
hand gripper		muscle development
dowel rods		sorting
assorted nuts, bolts, nails, screws, washers		sorting
ceramic tiles		sorting
assorted buttons in egg carton		sorting
pegboard & pegs		fine motor discrimination

COGNTIVE DEVELOPMENT

Rack-O	Milton Bradley	number sequence
Connect Four	Milton Bradley	following directions
Uno		matching
playing cards		matching
clock	Judy Company	time concepts

CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

drawer organizer for nuts, bolts, etc.	
plastic sorting trays	Michigan Products
cardboard file boxes	Calloway, Inc.

PRE-VOCATIONAL SKILLS

Loc Blocks	Entex	assembly
Wooden Nuts & Bolts Kit	World Ways Production	assembly
Fit-A-Slot	Michigan Products	assembly
Tinker Toys		assembly
ceramic tiles		flaw detection
assorted nuts, bolts, nails, screws, washers		assembly
ball point pens		assembly
tools: hammer, drill & drill guide, screwdriver, sandpaper		simple projects

LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

Rack-O	Milton Bradley
Connect Four	Milton Bradley
Tic Tac Toe	
Uno	
playing cards	
dominoes	
simple craft kits	

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PROGRAM EMPHASIS

	1ST YEAR	2ND YEAR	3RD YEAR
LOCATION	elementary school	elementary school	elementary school
STAFF	teacher of hearing impaired 2 paraprofessionals vision consultant o & m instructor	teacher of hearing impaired 3 paraprofessionals vision consultant o & m instructor	teacher of hearing impaired 3 paraprofessionals vision consultant
SPEECH & LANGUAGE	Northampton System of Diacritical markings for speech consistent demands for oral responses	calendar & news language experience stories	language structure more advanced time concepts through calendar work
BRAILLE	individual words spacing proper finger techniques	completed Grade 1 braille accuracy	began Grade 2
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	basic orientation protective techniques beginning cane techniques	travel in familiar areas	A.I.M. exercise program
MATH	oral rote counting one-to-one correspondence	introduction to abacus beginning addition	use of math textbook beginning money & time subtraction facts
DAILY LIVING SKILLS			
VOCATIONAL SKILLS			
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	consistent demands on behavior use of punishment	socialization w/ other student tolerance of new experiences beginning responsibility	decrease frustration when presented with difficult tasks
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	weekly visits to school behavioral expectations summer school	daily news sent to school weekly tape lessons summer school	school news sent home beginning homework summer school

	4TH YEAR	5TH YEAR
LOCATION	elementary school	elementary school part time high school
STAFF	2 teachers of hearing impaired 2 paraprofessionals vision consultant o & m instructor	4 teachers of hearing impaired 1 paraprofessional vision consultant
SPEECH & LANGUAGE	classification comprehension	use of auditory to self-correct speech errors
BRAILLE	completion of Grade 2 proper finger techniques	braille reading techniques
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	re-teaching cane skills re-orientation to campus concerns about limitations & poor posture habits	
MATH	use of braille wristwatch	
DAILY LIVING SKILLS		beginning skills simple food preparation use of utensils
VOCATIONAL SKILLS		
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	independent work praise for appropriate behavior	ignore inappropriate behavior increase social praise
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	home exercise program summer school	food preparation summer school

	6TH YEAR	7TH YEAR
LOCATION	high school 1 class in elementary school	high school
STAFF	2 teachers of hearing impaired 2 paraprofessionals vision consultant o & m instructor	3 teachers of hearing impaired 2 paraprofessionals vision consultant o & m instructor
SPEECH & LANGUAGE	language experience stories about daily living skills experiences	
BRAILLE	independent brailling	interchanging Grades 1 & 2 introduced Tellatouch
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	communication between student & instructor re-teaching cane skills exercise apparatus	advanced sighted guide techniques familization of residential & commercial areas
MATH	abacus related to meaningful activities meaningful time	money story problems responsibility for time opened savings account
DAILY LIVING SKILLS	expanded skills more food preparation recipe file	leisure time activities laundry skills
VOCATIONAL SKILLS	daily jobs within classroom	pay for job-check; signature adapted time clock contracted work assembly simulations
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	decrease temper tantrums work file for independent brailling	
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	weekly staff meetings summer school	reinforcement of daily living skills summer job

	8TH YEAR	9TH YEAR	PROJECTED
LOCATION	high school	high school	part-time school part-time vocational skills training part-time job in private sector
STAFF	3 teachers of hearing impaired 1 paraprofessional vision consultant o & m instructor	3 teachers of hearing impaired 1 paraprofessional vision consultant o & m instructor	special education staff employer co-workers
SPEECH & LANGUAGE			communication for specific job communication w/ employer & co-workers
BRAILLE	introduced directions & rules	purchased own Tellatouch	use of Tellatouch w/ employe & co-workers
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	cane travel public transportation shopping tasks adapted p.e. class	mall travel aerobics	travel to & from job
MATH	improved habits with abacus measurement	paper money complete responsibility for time & moving independently to classes	time on the job paycheck
DAILY LIVING SKILLS	convenience foods proper chewing	independent food preparation making choices	independence
VOCATIONAL SKILLS	use of actual time clock job in h.s. cafeteria - washing dishes	job tasks from the private sector	vocational skills training job training
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT		initiation of communication at home regarding school	socialization skills w/ co-workers leisure time activities
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	summer job	leisure time activities making choices	cooperation regarding vocational training & job

PLEASE NOTE: This is a summary of areas which were emphasized each year. Many of the activities were continued from year to year. There was not room on this hand-out to indicate the entire curriculum each year.

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